

Battle of Sutherland's Hill

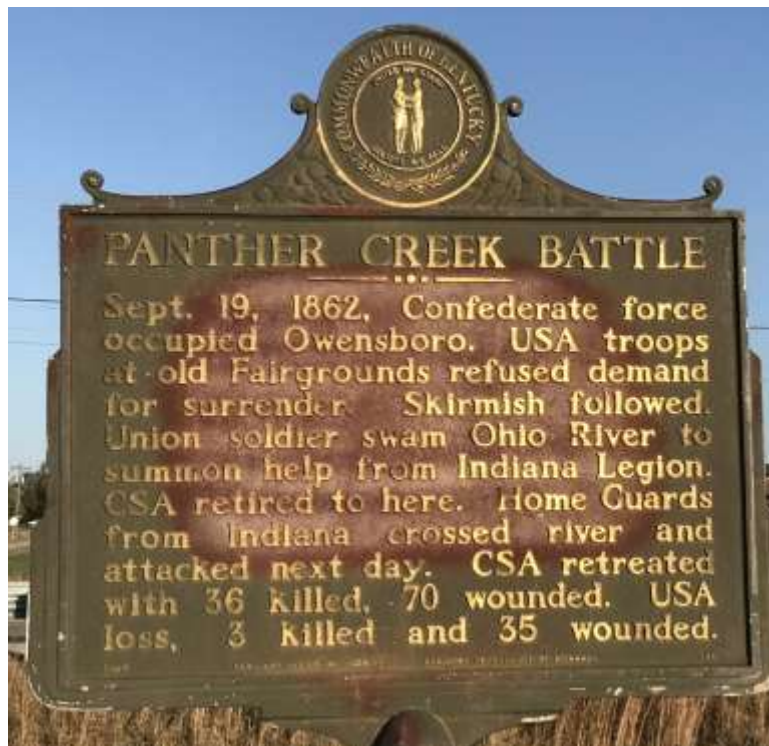
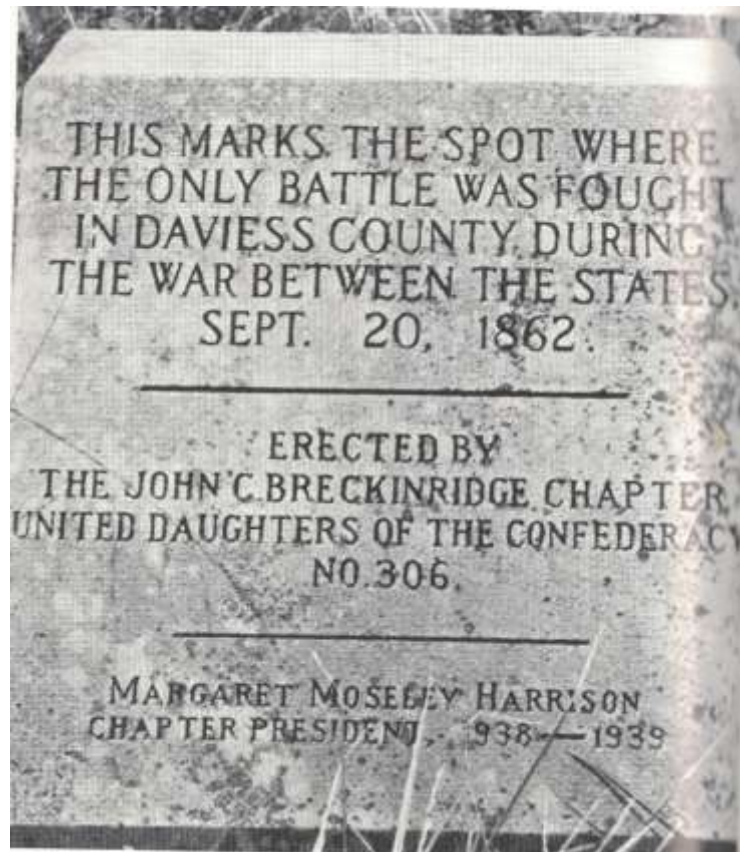
(Also known as the Battle of Panther Creek)

By Jerry Long
c.2025



Inscription: This marks the spot where the only battle was fought in Daviess County during the War Between the States. Sept. 20, 1862.

Marker was dedicated on 17 November 1940. It was erected by the John C. Breckinridge Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy. Marker is at Sutherland in Daviess County, KY at the intersection of U.S. 431 and Sharp Road, on the right when traveling south on U.S. 431.



Inscription: Sept. 19, 1862, Confederate force occupied Owensboro. USA troops at old Fairgrounds refused demand for surrender. Skirmish followed. Union soldier swam Ohio River to

summon help from Indiana Legion. CSA retired to here. Home Guards from Indiana crossed river and attacked next day. CSA retreated with 36 killed, 70 wounded. USA loss, 3 killed and 35 wounded.

Dedicated on 27 October 1964 by the Kentucky Historical Society and Kentucky Department of Highways. (Marker Number 745.) Marker is near Utica in Daviess County, Kentucky, It is at the intersection of U.S. 431 and Sharp Road, on the right when traveling south on U.S. 431. It is a few feet from the United Daughters of the Confederacy marker.



Sutherland is a hamlet located on rolling hills south of the Panther Creek bottoms about four miles south of Owensboro. A stop on the Evansville, Owensboro & Nashville Railroad was named Sutherland Station after land owner, Archibald C. Sutherland (1835-1895). Daviess County historian, Glenn Hodges wrote that "A wooden bridge was completed over Panther Creek just in time to permit Union forces to defeat a band of about 400 Confederate troops threatening Owensboro. The Union forces were able, thanks to the new bridge, to bring their cannon into play on the battlefield, thus assuring their victory."



Owensboro Monitor, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 24 September 1862, p.2:

The Raid on Owensboro.

On last Friday morning about sunrise, the guerrillas dashed into town, and before our citizens knew what was the matter, they had every street corner guarded, and the entire town in their possession. They then proceeded to take from the jail and from the stores what powder they could find and were on the point of robbing by wholesale some of the stores, but were restrained

by their officers. They were permitted, however, to rob Mr. Littell's shop of all the saddles and bridles he had on hand, and we believe Mr. Scott was relieved of some of his stock. At the same time squads were sent to arrest Union men from whom attempts were made to exact an oath to support the Southern Confederacy, which were unsuccessful with perhaps a single exception. They sent a demand of surrender to Col. Netter hoping to re-enact the Clarksville affair, but the gallant Colonel politely declined, and they as wisely declined to attack him. Col. Netter then made preparation to attack them and was placing a portion of his men as a reserve and protection for the camp while the main body should come up to town and engage the rebels, when he was fired upon by a concealed foe, and fell dead shot through the breast. His murderer was killed the next instant. The Federals lost several others in wounded and prisoners, also a number of horses. The guerrillas remained in town until one o'clock when they withdrew taking with them six or boys. They encamped a few miles town where they spent the night. Immediately after the arrival of the guerrillas two squads of soldiers were sent, one to Rockport and the other to Enterprise(Ind.) to notify the militia of the county opposite us. In a few hours the intelligence spread in every direction and nearly three hundred farmers young and old came with their guns to meet the insolent foe. steamer McCombs was impressed into service and brought them here about dark. They marched out during the night in search of the enemy, and about breakfast time Saturday morning came up with him at Southerland's farm seven miles from town. The battle opened with a running fight three-quarters of a mile this side Southerland's, sixty of Netter's cavalry driving the rear guard and cannon that distance into the lane that goes up to the house. Here the rebels were posted with one line drawn up in the lane and another over in the meadow at a right angle to the first with the cannon in front. Major Townes charged up the lane, exposed to the flanking fire of the battalion and cannon in the field, but his men and horses being untrained were thrown into confusion and with the exception of about twenty fled at the first fire. The infantry soon came up and took position along the main road in front of the meadow and corn field adjoining it. The rebels advanced to meet them and a desperate fight ensued, but unerring aim of the Indiana woodsmen committed such havoc in the rebel ranks that they were compelled to retire. They formed again however on the hill side, but were soon driven from this position. Again they endeavored to make a stand beyond the crest of the hill, but the final gallant charge of the Indianians scattered them in every direction. The rebels were in command of Lieut. Col. Martin and Major Scobee and numbered about 400 men. The Federal forces were commanded by Lieut. Col. Wood of the First Indiana Cavalry, and numbered 340 men including the cavalry that fled at the beginning of the battle and did not return. The Federal loss was three killed and nine or ten wounded, two seriously. Immediately after the battle Col. Wood detailed a squad of men to count the rebels lying upon the field, their report was 36 dead and more than 30 wounded. The secessionists assert that the rebel loss was 6 killed and 17 wounded, 3 of whom have since died. Their names are:

KILLED,

John Ward, Geo. Berry, James Keatch, R. W. Dunneville and two others not recognized.

WOUNDED.

George Robertson, since dead; from Henderson county – Phill Barbour, Andy Willingham, Bartlett Pirtle, S. D. Ball, Marian Justis since dead ; Webster county –| N. N. Rice, H. F. Keyhendall, Jesse Dills; Union county – Simon B. Floyd, Thomas Carlile, William Hausman since dead; E. R. Adams, Hopkins county; J. M. Agnue, McCracken county; Theopilus Favour, Ohio county; J. N. Muligan McLean county; __ Penington, Daviess county.

The names of the Federals killed are Curtis Lamar, Sampson Palmer, Isaac Varner. John Cahoon an old man fifty-four years of age had his thigh badly shattered and may not recover.

Several rebel prisoners, were taken. Our troops being, infantry with the exception of 20 or 30 mounted men, could not pursue the retreating rebels, and returned to town bringing their dead and wounded with them – The Indiana men were crossing in the afternoon as fast as they could be transferred in skiffs, when the steamer Ben South arrived bringing some four or five hundred Warwick county (Ind.) boys, some of whom were mounted. They disembarked and remained here until Monday we believe. Besides this reinforcement, two or three companies of home guards from our county came to town. The Spencer county troops who had not already gone were taken by the Ben South to their homes.

On Monday morning, orders were issued requiring all the stores closed and every male citizen to report himself at 3 o'clock. This order was complied with by nearly all, but a few had to be brought by a squad of soldiers and others still, fled from town and concealed themselves in the country. Monday night about 500 of the Evansville home guards and two companies of the 91st Indiana, arrived too late to get a fight. They returned to Evansville yesterday.

"There seems to be quite a controversy to how many rebels were killed and wounded in the battle last Saturday. We have been informed by several men who were in the battle and in whose veracity we have always had confidence, that they counted thirty-six dead and upwards of thirty wounded. On the other hand the secessionists, while they declare that the rebels retired in "good order," yet say that they left all their dead and wounded on the field; these numbered six killed and seventeen wounded. Now if this statement be true it proves these rebels to be very inhumane even for guerrillas. The idea that they would thus cruelly abandon their dead and dying comrades if their number was so small, seems unreasonable, especially if their retreat was not precipitated. We submit to any one this proposition; if a friend should fall by your side in battle, would you not try to bring his body or at least to place it where could direct his friends to find it? If he should be wounded, could you leave him exposed to the burning sun, and make no effort to save his life and alleviate his suffering? Would not your humanity prompt you to a discharge of these kind offices even if you were flying before a pursuing enemy? We fancy that you would raise the white flag over his bleeding form and suffer your self to be captured, before you would abandon him.. But how could you ever forgive yourself if you should leave him, when your party were retiring deliberately and in good order? The very fact that 400 well mounted men after a fight of an hour and a half left six dead and seventeen wounded on the field proves they had a great many more to carry away, other wise they were devoid of feeling or panic stricken.

So much for theory; now for fact: Two reliable citizens of McClean county, were in town Monday and state they met guerrillas after the battle, Major Scobee told them that he had been badly whipped, that he then had 270 men with him and had lost in killed, wounded and missing from seventy-five to eighty. He further said that he had fought against three or four thousand Federals.



Owensboro Monitor, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 1 October 1862, p.3:

It seems we were not correctly advised of the circumstances attending the death of Colonel Netter, and we therefore give the following a place in our columns:

HEADQUARTERS KENTUCKY VOLUNTEERS,
"Col. Gabriel Netters Avengers,"

Camp James F. Robinson, near Owensboro,
September 20th, 1862

Editor Owensboro Monitor:

On yesterday morning a band of guerrillas, numbering 850 strong, advanced upon this post. in three divisions, under the command of Lieut. Colonel Martin – one division, numbering 385, taking possession of Owensboro, the second division, under Capt. Taylor, numbering 225, marching from a southwest direction, the third division, under Capt. Merriweather, numbering 240, marching from a western direction. At about 8 o'clock "Major" Scobee came in with a flag of truce, (a handkerchief that looked as if it had seen the most active and dirty service for a month, and more resembled "the black than a flag of truce), and demanded an unconditional surrender – hoping no doubt to re-enact the Clarksville affair; but Colonel being a true soldier replied that he very respectfully declined their offer, and if they wanted him and his men they might fight for them. Col. Netter's men by acclamation re-echoed his answer. "Maj." Scobee retired somewhat confused. Colonel Netter formed his men, made all necessary arrangements, and marched against Capt. Merriweather, leaving the cannon and 140 men to protect the camp. He marched against Merriweather with 200 men, hoping to whip the guerrillas in detail. His advance guard, under Adjutant Stout, discovered the enemy in ambush, in a cornfield; Col. Netter flanked them and whilst gallantly leading his men in action, fell – shot through and through; he sprang to his feet, turned to his command, and his voice ringing like a clarion amidst the crashing reports of muskets of his command, and the shot guns and keen reports of the rifles of the enemy, called to his men – "Forward, charge. Bayon –" and fell. On seeing him fall, the left of the line gave way, the centre collecting around the Colonel amidst the deadly storm of bullets and buckshot from the enemy. The right also fell back. Adjutant Stout immediately assumed command and rallied the men, reforming line, advanced, and at the point of the bayonet completely routed the enemy, driving them in confusion from the ground.

The action lasted thirty minutes, and in no action were officers and men ever better tested than in this one – the enemy pouring amidst Netter's brave little band a perfect shower of bullets and buckshot.

The scoundrel that shot Col. Netter was killed by W. C. J. Adams, of Co. A, before he could take his gun from his shoulder – his brains spattering in the air.

Captain Taylor advanced upon the camp. The piece of ordnance in charge of Sergeant-Major Freeman opened fire upon them, as they advanced under cover of a point of woods, but a few well directed charges of canister and grape was sufficient to teach them that our officers and men were determined to avenge the fall of the gallant Colonel.

The attention of the men was now turned to the thieving band in Owensboro, but they, with their usual discretion, retired toward Livermore.

Our loss, killed – Colonel Netter, (irreparable loss); wounded, 4 – Lieut. Cherry, John London, A. W. Wallace, ___Taylor.

The enemy's loss, killed, 12; wounded, 15 or 20.

The gallant Colonel is no more, but his name and actions are bright in the memory of his command, and his fall will be rightfully and terribly avenged. W.



History of Daviess County, Kentucky
(Chicago, IL: Inter-State Publishing Co., 1883), pp.162-166:

THE SKIRMISH NEAR OWENSBORRO.

About sunrise on Friday, Sept. 19 [1862], a band of about 850 guerrillas advanced upon this post, in three divisions, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Martin. One division, numbering 385, under the command of Major J. S. Scobee, a Methodist minister, took possession of Owensboro. A second division, under Captain Taylor, numbering 225, marched from a southwest direction; and the third division, under the command of Captain Merriweather, numbering 240, from a westerly direction. As Major Scobee was inarching in he was recognized by a pious Methodist woman, who in immediate ecstasy cried out, "Thank God! my Savior has come."

Very soon a Confederate soldier was stationed at each street crossing, and efforts made to obtain what equipments and ammunition were within reach. During the day the soldiers took all the saddles and bridles there were in Mr. Littell's shop, and some of Mr. Scott's; also, what powder they could find in the jail and some of the stores, and were on the point of robbing the stores by wholesale, but were restrained by the officers. Judge Geo. H. Yeaman and several others were arrested and taken away a short distance, but soon released. From the Judge was exacted a promise to use his influence against the indiscriminate arrest of Southern sympathizers — which, indeed, he had all along been doing.

About eight o'clock this morning Major Scobee sent a flag of truce to Colonel Netter, in camp at the fair-grounds, and demanded his unconditional surrender; but the latter peremptorily, yet politely, refused. About one o'clock in the afternoon the Major, with his men, retired on the gravel road to Panther Creek.

Colonel Netter, immediately after his refusal to surrender, formed his men, made all necessary arrangements, and marched against Captain Merriweather with 200 men, leaving the cannon and 140 men to protect the camp. His advance guard, under Adjutant Stout, discovered the enemy in ambush, in a corn-field. Colonel Netter flanked them, and whilst leading his men in action, and in the act of climbing over a fence, he was shot, with a squirrel rifle, by one of the enemy who had a white handkerchief tied about his head; and he himself immediately had all his brains blown out by a Union soldier named W. C. J. Adams, of Company A. The report that James Faulds was the man who killed Netter is probably not true. At the same instant Colonel Netter, as he was shot, sprang to his feet, turned to his command, and with a clarion voice, amidst the crashing reports of muskets, called out, "Forward! charge bayon-" and fell. On seeing him fall, the left of the line gave way, the center collecting around him amidst the deadly storm of bullets and buckshot from the enemy. The right also fell back. Adjutant Stout immediately assumed command and rallied the men, reforming line, advanced, and at the point of the bayonet completely routed the enemy. This action lasted half an hour, resulting in the death of Colonel Netter and the wounding of Lieutenant Cherry, John London, A. W. Wallace and Mr. Taylor, on the Union side, and in the death of twelve and wounding of fifteen or twenty on the other side.

According to previous arrangement, squads of soldiers were detailed to Rockport and Enterprise, Ind., who gave the alarm, and within a few hours Colonel Wood, of the First Indiana Cavalry, was on hand and assumed Colonel Netter's place. Soldierly from across the river, to the number of 400 or 500, arrived during the afternoon of Friday as fast as they could be transferred in skiffs, and at the last the steamer Ben South brought the remainder of the Warwick County boys over, and also took the remainder of the Spencer County troops to their homes. The steamer

McCombs also was impressed [into service and brought about 300 Indiana farmers over toward night. Three companies of home guards also came into town, while many citizens left for parts unknown, to avoid the contingencies of a cruel siege or battle.

Sept. 20 –

THE BATTLE AT SUTHERLAND'S HILL.

This was the only battle that occurred within the limits of Daviess County during the " civil war." We will give first a complete history of the affair as told by the Federals, and then note the differences from their story as claimed by the other side.

During the night they were searching the enemy, and about breakfast time Saturday morning (Sept. 20) they came up with them on the gravel, or Livermore, road, about a mile and a half south of North Panther Creek, and on the farm of Mr. Sutherland, which is eight to nine miles from Owensboro. The Federals numbered 342, and were commanded by Colonel Wood, of Evansville, and James Holmes, of Owensboro. The battle opened with a running fight three quarters of a mile north of Sutherland's, sixty of Netter's Cavalry driving the rear guard and cannon that distance into the lane that goes up to the house. Here the Confederates, about 400 strong (or even more, according to some), were posted, under Colonel Martin and Major Scobee, with one line drawn up in the lane and another over in the meadow, at a right angle to the first, with the cannon, a six-pounder, in front. The Federals, numbering 340, were commanded by Colonel Wood. Major Townes charged up the lane, exposed to the flanking fire of the battalion and cannon in the field; but his men and horses, being untrained, were thrown into confusion at the first fire of the cannon, and all except about twenty fled. For a few moments then no Federals were in sight of the enemy; but the infantry soon came up, took position along the main road in front of the meadow and corn-field adjoining it. The Confederates advanced to meet them and a desperate fight ensued, when the enemy retreated a little way and formed in array again; but again were they driven back, when, for the third time, they endeavored to make a stand, just beyond the crest of the hill, but in vain; they scattered in every direction, but not pursued by the Federals, all of whom were infantry, except about two dozen.

The Federal loss in this battle was: Killed-Curtis Lamar, Sampson Palmer and Isaac Varner-three; wounded-John Calhoon and one other man, seriously, and a half dozen others more slightly. Immediately after the battle Colonel Wood detailed a squad of men to count the Confederates lying upon the field, and their report was thirty-six dead and over thirty wounded. The names of four of the killed and seventeen of the wounded are given in the Owensboro *Monitor* of Sept. 24, 1862. Some of the slain were buried there. About a thousand Federals remained to hold Owensboro.

The Confederate account concerning the two days' events differs from the foregoing principally in the following particulars: Their forces here were a branch of the regular army, and not guerrillas; they committed no robberies in Owensboro or in the country anywhere; they were not quite a hundred strong at the battle at Sutherland's; they retreated simply because their ammunition gave out, and retreated in good order; they lost but one or two killed, one commanding officer not remembering that any one was killed outright, or that any wounded (very few at most) were left upon the battle-field (if any were left, they felt confident they were left among friends, who would take care of them).

It must be understood, however, that accounts vary on both sides, some Confederates estimating their loss as high as seventy or eighty (probably counting, the prisoners, deserters, etc.), and the Federals not all agreeing as to every detail.

We add a few minor incidents.

When musket firing commenced at Sutherland's Hill, Colonel Wood shouted out, "Boys, wheel about that cannon, facing the enemy," and he himself lighted his cigar with a match, and fired the gun-the first and second rounds with cannister shot, and the third & solid shot, which was so heavy that it broke off the flange and rendered the cannon useless. When the Colonel and John Hicks were marching up the hill, a rifle shot was apparently received, when the Colonel fell as if dead. Hicks remarking that he was killed. the former jumped up and called out, "No, I ain't; but (pointing to a particular man among the enemy) kill that d-n rebel."

The Confederates rendezvoused afterward at some point on Green River. but were soon driven away again. The Federal forces were coming and going on the next Monday and Tuesday; nearly all the citizens were under arms for awhile, until the excitement died away.

THE DEATH OF COLONEL NETTER.

The following account of the death of Colonel Netter, furnished us by one of his soldiers, and now one of the best citizens of Owensboro, is so well worded that we give it verbatim:

On that eventful morning of the 19th of Sept., 1862, under cover of a dense fog. the enemy (800 in all) gained possession of the town to the number of about 400, while an equal number concealed themselves in the wood to the west of our camp, thus placing us between two forces, either of which was doubly superior to our own.

Our Colonel having received unreliable information of the presence of the concealed enemy, at once decided to reconnoiter in that direction and ascertain if the report was true.

While arranging his forces, a flag of truce was seen approaching from the direction of the town.

He motioned for the bearer to come. and advanced a few paces to meet him, where a short conversation ensued. He then returned to us accompanied by the officer of truce, and with the utmost politeness and a sweetness of tone so characteristic, he addressed us as follows:

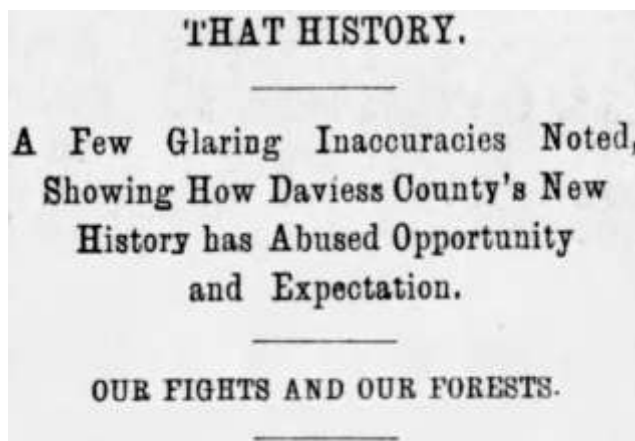
Boys, this officer comes with a flag of truce, from Lieutenant Colonel Martin, who with 800 guerrillas has possession of the town, and demands of me an unconditional surrender of all my command and the Government property in my possession. I want you to hear my answer." Then, turning to the messenger, with a graceful motion of the hand, and with a firm voice and tone, he replied: "NEVER, till the last man of us lies low in the dust." Then turning to us, sweetly and gently he inquired, "Boys, does my answer suit you?" Inspired with admiration for, and confidence in, our brave and undaunted commander, what could we do but just what we did? and that was to swing our caps in the air and respond with three lusty cheers. The rebel officer, witnessing the impressive scene, shared in our admiration of the young hero, for he reverently removed his hat and feelingly replied, "Colonel, I cannot but respect you and your brave men," and with a parting salute, he returned to deliver his message. There was no acting in all of their scene; it was serious, sober, honest reality. With the exception of a few words of command, these were the last words ever spoken by the gallant Netter. At the head of his little band of about 200 all told, he marched in the direction of the supposed enemy. He found them there, and in the skirmish which ensued he fell bravely, fighting to make good his words.

Colonel Gabriel Netter was a Frenchman by birth, but a true American by adoption. At the breaking out of the war he was doing a profitable business in Ohio County, this State, but left it to enter the army. He soon exhibited a great degree of good judgment as well as bravery, and he was recalled from the field by General Finnell to raise a regiment in this Congressional District. He was devoting his whole time and energy to the work he had in hand, when the day of disaster

visited him. He was very popular among his men, as well as among the people of Owensboro. He was a "shining mark " at which death aimed his fatal blow at the beginning of his power.



Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 29 May 1883, p.4:



Since our last issue we have seen somewhat more of the "History of Daviess County." Our examination, incomplete though it has been, reveals a work fearfully and wonderfully made considering the good material furnished by some of our citizens. This material is thrown in with matter taken from Collins' History of Kentucky, information from the State Geological Reports, election returns and bits of biography. The result is a chaos of literature frescoed all over with mistakes both ludicrous and mischievous.

Our dramatic critic discovered that it credited one of our most youthful business men, very recently married, with having a son already engaged in the tobacco trade and charged another with the youthful indiscretion of teaching school at the early age of three years. He concluded to sing its praises as a "Comedy of Errors," but in that light it began to stretch out so much like a Chinese play that he had to bid his muse hang up her harp. The best strung lyre couldn't reach the volume. As a record of public events our people had a right to demand that it should be faithful. But, if the muse of history ever weeps over a travesty of truth, she must have shed bitter, briny tears when her eyes first fell on the account of the battle at Sutherland's hill and the skirmish in which Col. Netter was killed. It purports to give the Federal statement, and deals in assertions which the Federals had no means of verifying. It then professes to give the points in which the Confederate account differs, and discredits their real view by putting in the mouths of some of them the most improbable statements. It is grossly inaccurate as to the numbers on the Confederate side, as we learn from reliable participants, and besides greatly overstating their numbers, it characterizes the body of men under Lieut. Colonel Martin – really a part of the 10th Confederate cavalry – as guerillas. The party described as 225 under Capt. Taylor, consisted chiefly of his company and numbered really only fifty or sixty. The "240 under Capt. Merriwether," were in fact thirty-eight poorly armed Confederates. They resisted the advance of Col. Netter and his troops determinedly, and instead of being driven from the field they drove the Federals back in much less than half an hour, and held their position commanding the river road for hours without any further demonstrations from the Federals. This veracious history says that Col. Netter was killed with a squirrel rifle, but assumes that the story that James Faulds shot him is not probable. All the

Confederates on the ground agree that Jas. Faulds did actually kill him, and that he was the only man among them who carried a squirrel rifle. Instead of the "routed enemy" being punished with "the death of twelve and the wounding of fifteen or twenty," investigation shows that the victorious thirty eight sustained no noticeable wounds and lost only one man – Richard Hayden, of Hancock county.

The account of the fight at Sutherland's farm is no nearer the truth in its estimate of the Confederates engaged, and very erroneous in some other respects, to say nothing of the singular circumstance that only "342 Federals were engaged in the battle," when to that number had been added, the day before, "400 or 500 soldiery from across the river," also "300 Indiana farmers" and "three companies of home guards." Now we are credibly informed that the Confederates were surprised and had no "six-pound cannon," but a single little gun of a caliber not much greater than a Belgian rifle, without suitable ammunition and not deserving to be ranked as artillery. That the same company of thirty-eight, or, at least, all of them that could get in line in time, were formed across the lane and resisted the Federal charge. After the fight, which was spirited on both sides in spite of the surprise, this company coolly covered the retirement, which was by no means a "scattering in every direction," but a retreat not at all unworthy, in its method, of a brave leader and gallant men. In spite of the rough ground and dense woods they lost neither toy cannon, horses, nor men, excepting, of course, those fallen in the field, numbering, according to physicians visiting the scene immediately, about twenty-one or twenty-two, of whom three or four were killed outright.

So much for the truth of history in that direction, and pity it is we have not space to pursue it further in some other directions. The many good citizens of Daviess who were engaged in the stirring scenes of the war, whether Federal or Confederate, had a right to expect in this book a fair report of all their noteworthy deeds, but when they find them thus mingled with false stigmas on their records, they might well exclaim for their contemporaries and their posterity, "Oh, history, what frauds are perpetrated in thy name."

But, remembering that Mercury rarely carried messages from Mars with fidelity, left the "war bulletin" to its time-tried mendacity and turned for refreshment to the beautiful botany of the book. We rambled with the author – whoever he might be – in the forests primeval, to say nothing of the wasted woods and deadenings of the day. We struck at once for "tall timber" and naturally turned towards the poplars." These monarchs of the forests, always reckoned among our chief timber trees, were dismissed with this remarkable bit of information: "The cottonwood is a well-known large swamp tree of but little account, and the quaking asp, or American aspen, is a true poplar and is scarce." The beech fared no better. The book assures us that this "very common tree in the lake region and the East was formerly represented by a few specimens in this county." It had been supposed by our citizens that this tree was plentiful in several regions of the county, and so abundant in one large section as to give it the name of the "Beech Woods." But this book made such sad havoc with our forests that we were about to tune up with the mournful melody of "Woodman spare that tree," when the author dissipated the gloom with the comforting communication that "the umbrella tree may possibly occur here." The recollection that these other trees had sheltered us and our desire to protect them, were at once utterly lost in the potential presence of the pure possibility that we might perchance enjoy that perfect protection which the umbrella tree must necessarily afford in its "neck of woods."

These are a few of the distinguishing marks of this awful annal, which is as peculiar for some things it contains as for many it omits. But space – if not life – is too short to point them all out. There are, however, a few beautiful biographies, ignominiously squelched for a failure of

consideration, which we may furnish as sort of second edition. And yet let us devoutly hope that this book is not the kind of history that repeats itself. Forbid it, Clio, and all the other muses!



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 14 December 1902, p.11:



Battle of Sutherland's Hill

The only battle of the civil war fought in Daviess county, was that known as the battle of Sutherland's Hill. It was not a fight of gigantic proportions, but it was a real battle in its deliberateness, details of preparations, results and aftermath.

After the skirmish at the fair grounds, in which Col. Netter and several others were killed and a number, wounded, Col. James M. Holmes took command. He reduced the chaos of the camp to order and sent a spy after the command of Scobee, which had retired in order in a southerly direction on the Livermore road. The spy who was sent out reported that the Confederates were camped on a ridge near the road on Sutherland's farm. At once preparations were made to attack them. About 600 soldiers, 200 of whom were cavalry, went out the Livermore road for the purpose. The infantry were stationed about six miles out the road and the cavalry were sent on to "engage the enemy." Pickets had been stationed along the road by the Confederates and they fled in ample time to notify their main body of the approach of the Union cavalry. This permitted the Confederates to form in good order just over the Sutherland ridge and to be prepared to attack suddenly or to resist an attack. When the Union cavalry advanced they were met by the Confederates. The latter soon fell back and reformed. Again they fell back or were forced back and again reformed. Finally they retreated, leaving the Unionists masters of the field. Estimates Vary, All kinds of estimates were made and still are given as to the number engaged on each side, the number killed and wounded. The friends of the Confederates vary in their accounts of the number killed from two to eighty, and of the number of troops engaged from 100 to 400. Of the Unionists there must have been from 400 to 600 troops and three killed and a dozen wounded.

Col. Wood, who commanded with Col. Holmes, detailed a squad to count the dead Confederates immediately after the battle. They reported thirty-six dead and thirty wounded. Even the names of the Federal killed are preserved: Curtis Lamar, Sampson Palmer and Isaac Varner. John Calhoon was seriously wounded and a dozen others only slightly.

The Owensboro Monitor of September 24, 1862, is said to have contained the names of four Confederates who were wounded. Tradition says the Confederates bore their dead and wounded from the field so that the Unionists could not correctly estimate their loss. Another traditional account says the Confederates had no time in which to do anything but "skedaddle in haste." The Confederates determinedly denied that they were guerrillas, or that they were guilty of waging guerrilla warfare or of robbing, while the Unionists spoke and now speak of them only as guerrillas.

Gun Rendered Useless.

It is said that Col. Wood, after capturing the one cannon which the Confederates had at Sutherland's Hill, had it faced about and "touched it off" with his lighted cigar. The gun was soon rendered useless by the firing of a heavy solid shot, which broke off the flange.

After the battle the Confederates fell back to a position on Green river, from which they were soon driven.

A Maj. Townes seems to have been in the thick of the charge up Sutherland's lane. Of him, those who now speak, have only the very kindest of things to say. "He was a perfect gentleman," said one lady, who knew him well, to the writer. But of Col. Netter, who was killed on September 19, 1862, at or near "Camp Silas F. Miller," very divergent statements are made. A soldier, who was in his command at the time, said a few days ago to the writer that Netter was wholly unfit for the work of getting up a regiment in this district, or even of commanding a company. Others describe him as being "a very polite Frenchman by birth, a patriotic American by adoption, and a gentle and brave commander by nature and by training." So different are the traditions, so strongly colored even now after forty years, that it is not yet time for a history of "Netter's occupancy of Owensboro," "Scobee's Raid" or the battle of Sutherland's Hill, to be committed to the everlasting page of history.

While this is true, the incidents as given by those still living are very interesting, and it for the purpose of giving some of these that the Messenger today renews the fight of Sutherland's Hill.

Col. Holmes Talks.

The best known survivor of that "bloody struggle" still living here is Col. Holmes, who resides with his wife on Anthony street. He is very much disinclined to talk about his part in the war and positively forbid the writer to name many details of his war career, which were highly creditable to him, both as a soldier and as a citizen. He finally agreed to tell, in his way, what he knew of the Sutherland hill battle. He said:

"I had obtained a leave of absence, because of ill health, and had returned home. This was at the time Bragg was invading Kentucky. As soon as he crossed the Kentucky-Tennessee line I asked to be permitted to join my regiment. I came to Owensboro for the purpose from my home, which was then midway between Knottsville and Philpot. When I got to the city soon learned that a body of soldiers was approaching the city. I was in my uniform. A Mr. Dorsey, who was a banker here then, was a warm friend of mine. He insisted upon my spending the night with him and I did so. He then lived in the present old seminary building on. Fourth street, between Walnut and Mulberry.

"The soldiers who were reported coming to the city soon marched up Fourth street by the house at which was stopping. I soon saw that they were carrying the Confederate flag. I thought they saw me, but I stepped back behind the door and it seems was unobserved. This fact was afterwards explained because the soldiers were intent on looking to the north side of the street beyond which were encamped the soldiers of Col. Netter. This was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. I had two horses in the city which I expected to take with me to the army. I requested my friend Dorsey to send me the better of the two horses, if it had not already been taken by the guerrillas, and I planned to join the troops under Col. Netter. then encamped at the old fair grounds, now known as Paradise garden.

Netter Was Killed.

"The horse came and I started, but as I did so I learned that Netter had been killed, He had heard that the Confederates were in the city and left his camp to form a picket line for his troops',

protection when he was shot and killed. The news of his death had a most demoralizing effect on his men. I hastened to the camp and found the utmost confusion prevailing. Men were trying to get away in every direction and even to conceal their arms. I restored order as well as I could and sent across the river for reinforcements which soon came, parts of two regiments of 'home guards,' and as soon as I got these, in fact before, I began to look out for the location of, the Confederates, of whom there were about six hundred. I soon found that they had gone south of the city about seven miles where they had camped just in the rear of a beautiful ridge at what was then and has since been known as Sutherland hill. I at once made ready to march upon them. Recruits came from Enterprise and from Rockport. With these came one Col. Wood. Because of the condition of my eyes I at once yielded the command to him and at the same time told him where the 'enemy' was and what plans I had decided upon.

"My plan was to attack the Confederates with my full force, but Wood at once changed this plan and ordered me to take the cavalry and 'play with the enemy,' he promising to back my cavalry up with his infantry. I explained the newness of the horsemen, declared I could not 'play' with such troops and said I feared the first shots from the one field piece which I knew they had at the hill would scatter my men. This brought out the peremptory order that I obey and at once. This I did, and, after leaving a small guard at camp, Miller and another at the court house, we started early on Saturday morning, so as to attack the camp about daylight and to take the Confederates by surprise, if possible. We met their pickets at Panther creek and these fled and gave the alarm.

Confederates Were Gone.

When we got to the scene of the fight no Confederates were to be seen, but they were only getting ready behind the ridge, and before we got to the top they charged over the brow of the hill to meet us. They fired rapidly with muskets and rifles and a cannon and, just as I anticipated my men were at once thrown into a panic. I had a strong voice then and I commanded them to turn about and face the enemy, but it was useless. They would only run and directly away from the enemy. I even drew my saber and threatened to run it through the fleeing ones, but they paid no attention to me, to my voice or to my threats. Nor did they stop until they put the infantry between them and the forces of Scobee and Martin. But now that we had our full force and men of more experience, we charged on the pursuing Confederates and quickly defeated them, though for a short while there was sharp fighting.

Col. Holmes thinks he had only sixty men against six hundred in this "play." He says he wished to follow the retreating enemy, but Wood would not permit this.

Immediately after the battle Col. Holmes rejoined his regiment and soon participated in the bloody battle of Perryville, in which his superior officer, James S. Jackson, for whom the local G. A. R. post is named, was killed.

Col. Holmes entered the service as a private. In four days after enlisting received a captain's commission, and in two months he was made a major. While a major he lost his health and especially the full use of his eyes, but notwithstanding this he received another promotion, this time to a lieutenant colonelcy. He rendered important services to the government, but one of which many of his friends often speak in unstinted praise is the saving of a regiment in charge of Notorious Burbridge, from making a serious and fatal blunder. This happened near Beaver Dam. The colonel has many friends now who would have shed no tears then if he had let Burbridge lose his head and his whole regiment, too.

Others who entered the service at the same time that Col. Holmes was sworn in were John Adcock, now postmaster at Philpot; Richard Wooten, still a resident of Owensboro, and John Walters, who was killed here by guerrillas during the war.



The Partisan Rangers of the Confederate States Army,
Adam R. Johnson & William J. Davis
(Louisville, KY: G.G. Fetter Co., 1904) pp.348-350:

[Gen. Adam R.] Johnson and [Col. Robert M.] Martin had such a small force, and had heard from the citizens such exaggerated stories of the Federal numbers that they did not follow up this victory. They afterwards believed that had they pursued them closely they could have captured the entire demoralized command before they could have gotten on the steamboat at Caseyville for safety. This memorable fight occurred upon the third or fourth of September, 1862.

Colonel Johnson now went South, leaving Martin in command. Martin met the other companies at the Holman farm on the sixteenth of September, and marched to the neighborhood of Slaughtersville, Kentucky; thence to Ashbysburg on the Green river, which he crossed on the eighteenth, and moved in the direction of Owensboro. They camped part of the night on Panther creek at Glen's bridge. Colonel Martin, Major Scoby and Captain Owen got lunch at Mrs. Oglesby's. As all of them were devoted Southerners, both she and her daughters treated them with the greatest kindness. The young ladies were then unmarried, but later became the wives of physicians who became very prominent in their profession. One of them was then a gallant Confederate soldier in the First Kentucky Cavalry. He was the late Dr. Soyars, of Slaughtersville, Kentucky, who died about nine years ago. The other was a noble citizen of the same town.

Colonel Martin now advanced upon the beautiful city of Owensboro at daylight, September 19, 1862, and found there Colonel Netter with about four hundred men and one piece of artillery. They were camped in the fair grounds below the town. The Confederates captured a few soldiers who were found in the town, and so far as the city itself was concerned, they had it all their own way. Martin sent in a demand for the surrender of the camp to Colonel Netter, but was refused. Martin had previously sent the companies of Captain S. B. Taylor, J. S. Chapman, and Clay Merriwether below the camp, and thus had the enemy completely surrounded. Netter came out with a company to reconnoiter the force below his camp and see, it has been recently learned, if he could find any way to save his horses if he was compelled to surrender. This Federal commander was killed in a skirmish with this force, but the Confederates did not know it until the next day. Martin decided that it was not best to attack the Federals in the position they held as they had already captured in the town they most needed — ammunition. They quietly marched out and camped on the Southerland farm ten miles out on the Halford [sic] Road, with the intention of attacking a regiment that was being formed by Colonel Shanks, to be called the Twelfth Kentucky Cavalry. It was heard next morning that the Indiana Legion had come across the river to Owensboro and would give the Confederates battle if they would wait for them. The next morning the Twelfth Kentucky charged the Confederate forces in great style, but upon being repulsed they retreated and appeared no more upon the scene.

Martin requested Owen to accompany him upon a reconnoissance of the Indiana forces. Riding through the woods parallel to the road, they came within sight of their infantry and artillery a quarter of a mile beyond Panther creek upon the Owensboro Road. Both of these Confederate

officers could not resist taking a pop at the nearest of the enemy, then galloped back to their camp, and much to their surprise their fire not being returned. Martin at once marched his regiment down to a level meadow, relinquishing the strong position they were occupying on the hill and ridge near the Southerland residence. He formed his men about eighty yards from a heavy stake and rider fence running parallel to the big road and within a few feet of same, and there awaited an attack. There was a ditch between the fence and the road which Martin had failed to discover until too late to remedy the mistake, as the Yankees had crawled up that ditch and put the muzzle of their guns through the fence just above the bottom of the ground rails. Thus entirely shielded, they poured a murderous fire into the Confederate forces, killing a number of splendid men, among them James Keach, orderly sergeant of Captain Fisher's Company B; George Berry, of Company F, Richard Dunville, orderly sergeant of Company A, as well as many others, numbering thirty-six in all, killed and wounded. The Federals being much greater in numbers and shielded by their strong breastworks, the Confederates were compelled to withdraw after standing their ground bravely for some time. They were not followed more than a half a mile, then recrossing the river at Ashby's ferry, they camped for the remainder of the night on the opposite bank. The next morning they were confronted by two Federal battalions with two brass six-pounder cannon. The wearers of the gray took refuge in an earthen fort made by Colonel Shackelford in 1861, and as it was upon a high hill overlooking the river and town, they repelled the charge of the enemy, then slipped out at the rear of the fort and marched down the river and flanked the Union forces. Company A of the Confederate force had a small skirmish with one of the scouting parties, and the Federals, fearing that a trap had been laid for them, crossed the river and went into camp on the other side. Later they recrossed the river at Clarksville and returned to Henderson.

The next morning the Confederates sent their cannon to a place of safety, concealing it in a thicket near Mr. W. H. Jackson's, this gentleman being familiarly known as Uncle Hal. A few days later the Confederates learned that one of Uncle Hal's negroes had seen their hidden treasure, and fearing that he would tell the Yankees of its whereabouts William Wilkerson, James Waller, Thomas Washington and others covered it with a wagon sheet and hauled it through the fields to the very head of the east fork of Deer creek, where it remained about a year, when the Yankees captured Wilkerson and scared him into telling where it was. The Federals then unearthed it, and carried it to Owensboro, where it was used for a morning and evening gun as long as the Thirty-fifth Regiment remained there. Upon the anniversary of the death of Colonel Netter this gun was said to have been fired a hundred times on the bank of the river until it exploded and badly crippled the gunner, Kelley Shelton, of Pratt, Kentucky, who is yet living, minus his right arm.



Col. Robert M. Martin



Rev. J. S. Scobee



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 24 September 1939, p.3B:

Only War Between The States Battle In Daviess County Was Fought On Sutherland's Hill 77 Years Ago Last Wednesday

Confederate and Union Troops Met Morning of September 20, 1862.

By John W. Potter

Peaceful in appearance though it is now, an evenly rising hill on the farm of Dr. C. L. Medley, about six miles from the city limits of Owensboro on the Livermore road, was quite a different looking spot 77 years ago last Wednesday.

It was that day – Sept. 20, 1862 – that Daviess county's only War Between the States battle was fought. It is true that that hill, then known as Sutherland's hill, was not the scene of the only fighting in Daviess county during the War Between the States, but under the dictionary definition it was the scene of the only battle.

Confederate and Union troops – both infantry and cavalry – met on the hill and began the battle that did not end until a number impossible to determine accurately had been killed and the Confederate soldiers had exhausted their ammunition supply and made an orderly retreat.

A residence now used as a tenant house on the old Sutherland farm, which has since become the Medley farm, was used as a hospital during that battle; a spring to the west of the hill was used by the soldiers as a source of water; a small wooded section to the south served as a burying ground for the dead. Those things remain today to remind one of the battle.

Versions Differ

While versions of the battle as given by Confederate and Union sources differ, they give a vivid picture of what happened there on that day.

During the night of Friday, Sept. 19, 1862, Union soldiers were searching for the enemy and about breakfast time the opposing military organizations met on the then Sutherland farm.

Union troops numbered 342, according to the version of that side, while the Confederate troops were about 400 in number. (The Confederate version was that there were less than 100 wearing the grey of the South.)

Commanded by a Colonel Wood, of Evansville, Ind., and by James Holmes, of Owensboro, the Union soldiers began firing on the Confederate arm bearers, who were commanded by a Colonel Martin and a Major Scobee.

The battle opened with a running fight three quarters of a mile north of Sutherland's hill, with sixty of Netter's cavalry driving the rear guard and cannon that distance into the lane that leads to the house that served as the hospital. There the Confederates met them, with one line drawn up in a lane and another over in the meadow, at a right angle to the first, and with a six-pound cannon in front. A Major Townes (Union) charged up the land, exposed to the flanking fire of the battalion and cannon in the field, and then one of the saddest moments of the battle for the

Union force occurred when men and horses under the command of Major Townes, being untrained, were thrown into confusion at the first cannon shot and all fled with the exception of about 20.

For a few moments the Confederates were jubilant because there were no Union soldiers in sight, but because, but infantry soon came and took positions along the Livermore road fronting the meadow and cornfield that adjoined it. The Confederates advanced to meet the enemy and soon musket and cannon fire rang out with a desperate battle ensuing.

Confederate soldiers retreated a short distance, formed in array again but were again driven back. For a third time they endeavored to make a stand, just beyond the crest of the hill, and, according to the Confederate version, retreated when they had no more ammunition. The Union troops did not pursue.

Confederate Account

The Confederate account of the event set out that their forces were a branch of the regular army and not guerillas; that despite reports to the contrary they committed no robberies in Owensboro or in the country anywhere; they lost but one or two killed, that none were left wounded upon the battleground.

Union sources said their loss in the battle was three killed and eight wounded, only two of them seriously; that immediately after the battle Colonel Wood detailed a squad to count the Confederates lying on the field and that they reported 36 dead and over 30 wounded. About 1,000 Union soldiers remained to hold Owensboro.

The apparant calmness of Colonel Wood was shown by his action when firing began.

"Boys, wheel about that cannon," he shouted, lighted a cigar with a match and then fired the gun. The first and second rounds of cannon fire were of cannister shot, and the third was a solid shot that was so heavy it broke off the flange and rendered the weapon useless.

His humor was illustrated when he was marching up the hill with a John Hicks. A rifle shot rang out and Colonel Wood fell as if dead.

Hicks thought the colonel was killed, but the latter immediately jumped up and cried: "No, I ain't dead, but (pointing to a Confederate soldier) kill that rebel."

[Caption below three pictures: "The appearance of the hill (top) on which Daviess county's War Between the States battle was fought is not the same now as it was 77 years ago. The house at bottom, left, was used as a hospital during the battle, and the spring at the feet of Mrs. J. H. Harrison, president of the John C. Breckinridge chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, furnished water to quench the thirst of the soldiers."]



Owensboro: The City on the Yellow Banks, Lee A. & Aloma Williams Dew **(Bowling Green, KY: Rivendell Publications, , 1988) pp.53-54:**

For the people of Owensboro the war really arrived on September 19, 1862. On that day 850 Confederates under Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Martin and Major J.S. Scobee, a licensed Methodist minister, converged on the town. Scobee was recognized by a pious Methodist woman who cried out in ecstasy, "Thank God, my savior has come."

The guerrillas had "every corner guarded and the entire town in their possession." They looted the jail and stores for gunpowder and took saddles and bridles from a hardware store.

Colonel Gabriel Netter, commander of the Fifteenth Cavalry (Union) stationed at the fair grounds, was ordered by the guerrillas to surrender. "Never, till the last man of us lies low in the dust," he responded. The Confederates were finally driven south of town, but Netter was killed in the skirmish. The southerners took a number of prisoners and horses as they withdrew.

A Union soldier who escaped the fray swam the Ohio to alert the Home Guards in Rockport that Owensboro was "in possession of Rebel guerrillas, and that Colonel Netter . . . had been killed, and the camp was on the point of surrendering. . . ." Within eight hours a group of about 450 to 500 Indiana Legionnaires entered Owensboro. They found that considerable damage had been done and that the Rebels were still plundering. Order was quickly restored and during the night about 100 more Spencer County, Indiana troops arrived.

An advance was ordered on the Confederates, camped about eight miles south of town, at 2 a.m. on September 20. The Battle of Panther Creek, sometimes referred to as the Battle of Sutherland's Hill, began at daylight. The Union forces consisted of one artillery squad with a six pound gun, 60 of Netter's cavalry, and 350 Indiana Home Guard infantry. "Whether by accident or imprudent design, the calvary became engaged with the entire force of the enemy, before either guns or infantry were in supporting distance," Colonel J. W. Crooks, commander of the Indiana Legion, stated in his official report. The enemy, he said, had "no less than 500 men, or not materially over," and the Unionists had not over 365.

"The guerrillas lost thirty-six killed, fifteen wounded, besides they took away two wagon loads of their wounded during the engagement. The entire loss of the enemy in killed and wounded was acknowledged by them to be between seventy-five and eighty, and we took sixteen prisoners, besides a large number of guns, pistols, sabers, saddles, blankets and horses," Crooks reported. The Union loss was three killed and thirty-five wounded.

Although having local fame, the battle is listed by the *Official Records* simply as a "skirmish at Owensborough, Kentucky." It must be noted that this battle was not fought between "regular" troops, but between rebel guerrilla forces and local home guard units. Indiana troops remarked after the battle that the Union men of Owensboro did not turn out "as they should have" to help fight the enemy.



Daviess County, Kentucky Celebrating Our Heritage, 1815-2015
(Evansville, IN, M. T. Publishing Company, Inc., 2015), pp.9 &62:

Daviess County Bicentennial Chronology:
200 Historical Events – By Jerry Long

1862, 9-20 Battle of Panther Creek is fought at Sutherland Hill. It was the only battle in Daviess County during the Civil War. A Kentucky Historical Highway marker near the site of the former Sutherland School reads: Sept. 19, 1862, Confederate force occupied Owensboro. USA troops at old Fairground refused demand for surrender. Skirmish followed. Union soldier swam Ohio River to summon help from Indiana Legion. CSA retired to here. Home Guards from Indiana crossed river and attacked next day. CSA retreated with 36 killed, 70 wounded. USA loss, 3 killed and 35 wounded.

The Civil War Years in Daviess County

By Glenn Hodges & Aloma Williams Dew

The 15th Kentucky Cavalry, comprised of about 400 men under the command of Lt. Colonel Gabriel Netter, set up camp at the fairgrounds on the edge of Owensboro to protect the town. After Johnson's fight with Union forces in Union County, he rode south, but sent his second in command, Lt. Colonel Robert Martin, along with Major J.S. Scobee, to southern Daviess County where they camped along Panther Creek. Aware that Netter's men were on the town's edge, Martin sent half of his men into Owensboro on September 19, 1862 under Major Scobee who dashed into the heart of Owensboro at sunrise and took all the weapons, ammunition, bridles, and saddles from a local store. They also arrested George Yeaman, the commander of the Owensboro Home Guard. Then, under a flag of truce, Scobee and his men rode out to Colonel Netter's camp and demanded his surrender. Netter refused, responding, "Never, till the last man of us lies low in the dust."

As the Confederate cavalry withdrew, Netter and his troops followed Martin's men moving south on the Livermore Road. When Netter made contact with Martin's rear guard, a brief skirmish ensued. Netter was shot in the head and killed, and his green troops, shaken by their leader's death, retreated to Owensboro. A Union soldier who escaped swam the Ohio River to alert the Home Guard in Rockport. Within 8 hours a group of about 450 to 500 Indiana Legionaries entered Owensboro to find that much damage had been done and the rebels were still plundering. After order was restored, about 100 more Spencer County troops arrived.

The next day, the only Civil War battle in Daviess County, listed in the Official Records, the Battle of Panther Creek, occurred at daybreak at a site then known as Sutherland's Hill, located about six miles from the city limits along what is now US 431. The Union forces consisted of one artillery squad with a 6 pound gun, 60 of Netter's cavalry, and 350 Indiana Home Guard Infantry led by Colonel William Wood. Together the Union troops moved south, trying to catch up with Martin's rebels. At about breakfast time, the opposing military units clashed on the Sutherland farm. Union troops numbered about 365, the Confederates, no fewer than 500 men.

The battle opened with a running fight on Livermore Road about a mile north of Sutherland's Hill as 60 Union cavalry drove the rear guard and artillery battery of Scobee's troops south to the Confederate camp. There the rest of Martin's soldiers engaged the Union force, positioned with one battle line on high ground, and another in the meadow at a right angle to the first. As the untrained Union troops charged, they were quickly exposed to the flanking rifle and cannon fire. They were thrown into confusion and fell back. For a few moments, the Confederates were jubilant because there were no Union soldiers in sight, but more Federal infantry soon arrived and established a battle line along Livermore Road fronting the meadow and cornfield that adjoined it.

Making a tactical mistake of leaving their strong defensive position on the high ground, the Confederates advanced to meet the enemy and soon faced strong musket fire. Confederates were forced back a short distance. They formed another line and charged, but once more were driven back. They tried to make a stand on low ground just beyond the crest of the hill, but had to withdraw because they were running out of ammunition.

The retreating rebel forces headed for Ashbyburg Ferry on the Green River, hoping to escape into Henderson County. The Union troops pursued but soon gave up the chase. Confederates later reported they had lost only one or two men killed, and none of their wounded on the battlefield. Immediately after the battle, Colonel Wood detailed a squad to count the Confederates lying on the field. They found 36 dead and 15 wounded, and took away two wagon loads of their wounded during the fight. The entire loss of the enemy killed and wounded was acknowledged to be between 75 and 80, and 16 prisoners taken. The Union force casualty report

included three killed and 35 wounded, only two of them seriously. This "skirmish at Owensborough, Kentucky" was not fought between "regular " troops, but between guerrilla forces and local home guards.



Grave of Col. Gabriel Netter (1836-1862)
Oak Hill Cemetery, Evansville, IN



Reenactment of Battle of Sutherland's Hill
7 -8 August 1976 at Ben Hawes State Park

